Scientific Advisory Committee of the centre was to augment the development of Regional Centre (South) for advanced research in agriculture related health problems.

(b) It has been reported that the Centre has already initiated activities in the field of Agriculutre viz. Agro-medicine and Agricultural Hygiene also. They have approached the Government of Karnataka for allocation of a suitable plot of land also.

Rajiv Gandhi Memorial Lecture on population growth

1312. SHRIMATI CHANDRIKA ABHINANDAN JAIN: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the first Rajiv Gandhi Memorial Lecture delivered by Mr. Robert S. McNamara, former World Bank President at New Delhi on 23rd May, 1992 wherein he has outlined a new programme to check population growth in the country; and

(b) if so, what are the details thereof and the reaction of the Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRIMATI D. K. THARA DEVI SIDDHARTHA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Delivering the first Rajiv Gandhi Memorial Lecture, Mr. Robert S. McNamara had emphasized the importance of population control to advance human development. He had outlined the adverse impact of rapidly growing population on environment and quality of life of the people. He indicated that even if the fertility rates continue to decline as at present, the country will have an additional population of 435 million in the next 30 years. According to him, the population control in India had been narrowly identified with family planning. In consequence, the family planning programme which in itself needed strengthening, has had to bear virtually th eentire population burdon, to the detriment of both the programme itself and the progress of fertility reduction . He maintained that India should give adequate attention to other factors which also effect fertility, in particular, the age at which women marry and the status of women especially as reflected in their educational levels. He has outlines the need for increased use of contraceptives, better status for women, setting up of a National Population Council, launching a campaign to promote delayed marriages among women, ensuring the retention and enrolment of girls in primary schools, etc. to reduce the population growth in the country.

The Government is fully seized of the population problem facing the country. For accelerating the pace of acceptance of small family norm in the country, new policies aiming at adopting a holistic approach have been evolved. These policies intend giving due importance to socio-economic factors like female literacy, status of women, employment of women, right age of marriage of girls, attitudinal changes in regard to strong son preference, etc. They recognise the importance of improvement of quality and outreach of family welfare services, reduction of infant, child and maternal mortality, eliciting large participation of the people in population control efforts and the need to have strong administrative support and political will for pursuing the population control programme. A Committee of the National Development Council on Population has been set up to take into account the multi-sectoral dimension of the population issues and to evolve a National Population Policy An Action Plan has been prepared in consultation with State Governments and Union Territories Administration for imparting a new thrust and dynamism to the Family Welfare Programme. Most of the suggestions by Mr. Mc. Namara are already incorporated in the Action Plan and this Action Plan is being operationalised by the States/UTs. The population control programme has been given high priority in the Eighth Five Year Plan.